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R E P O R T
ON THE
KEEPING OF SWINE
IN THE
CITY OF PROVIDENCE.

MAY 8, 1865





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REPORT

ON THE

KEEPING OF SWINE

IN THE

CITY OF PROVIDENCE, Board of Health

MADE TO THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN, MAY 8, 1865,

BY

EDWIN M. SNOW, M. D.,

SUPERINTENDENT OF HEALTH.

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THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE.

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN, May 8, 1865.

Read: whereupon it is *ordered*, that the same be received and printed
in pamphlet form.

Witness:

SAMUEL W. BROWN, CITY CLERK.

REPORT ON SWINE.

TO THE HONORABLE THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN
OF THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE:—

GENTLEMEN,—In a brief communication at your last monthly meeting, I promised, in a short time to give my reasons for believing that the granting of licences to keep swine under stables was wrong in principle, and that, in practice, it would prove prejudicial to the public interests, and indirectly of serious injury to the public health.

Before considering this particular question, it may be well to refer briefly to the action of the Board of Aldermen upon this subject, in past years.

At the time of the prevalence of Asiatic Cholera in 1854, investigations were made by me, in relation to the causes of the disease. I became satisfied, and I believe the City Government and the people generally were satisfied, that the keeping of hogs was one of the principal causes of the disease in certain localities. The reports of cases of the disease, by many physicians, unanimously confirmed this opinion.

Acting upon this belief, the hogs were pretty generally removed from the city, by order of the Board of Aldermen. They soon began to reappear and increased to an alarming extent.

On the tenth of December, 1855, I called the attention of the Board of Aldermen to the subject, in a communication, which was also signed by the City Marshal, and recommended the passage of the following resolutions, which were unanimously adopted on that day :

1. *Resolved*, That there shall no licenses be granted to keep swine in the City of Providence, except in that portion of the city lying East and North of a line running from Harrington's Lane through Green Lane to Olney Street, through Olney Street to Hope Street, through Hope Street to Front Street, and through Front Street to Seekonk River.

2. *Resolved*, That no licenses be granted in the portion of the city, East and North of the line above named, except to actual residents of that portion of the city.

3. *Resolved*, That no licenses be granted to keep swine under any stable, or within one hundred feet of the residence of any other person than the one to whom the license is granted.

4. *Resolved*, That no licenses shall be granted except on condition that the person receiving it shall not collect swill from any other person or house in the City of Providence, and upon any violation of this condition, the license shall be forfeited.

At that time, the portion of the city excepted in the first resolution had but very little population, and the intention of the resolutions was to grant no licenses to keep swine except to persons living isolated, and somewhat under the circumstances of a farming population.

The City Marshal was directed to procure the removal of all hogs from other portions of the city, and if not removed, to prosecute their owners.

The action of the Board of Aldermen has been in accordance with those resolutions, generally, from that time to the present.

At times, the hogs have increased so much, and the complaints about them have been so numerous, that I have called the attention of the Board of Aldermen to the subject, and orders have been passed directing the City Marshal to prosecute the owners and procure the removal of the hogs. Such orders were passed in May 1858, and on one other occasion, the date of which I have been unable to find. At these times the whole

subject has been discussed, a large number of petitioners have had leave to withdraw, and the principles of the resolutions of December, 1855, have been unanimously reaffirmed.

But, notwithstanding the uniform action of the Board of Aldermen, the law has never been strictly enforced, and the number of hogs in the city has largely increased until the present time.

The subject is again before your Board, and is again to be decided by you. It is desirable that it should be decided in a manner that will give no encouragement for the presentation of petitions for licenses in future.

The situation of the city with regard to hogs, at the present time is about as follows :

First.—Nearly all the horse stables in the city have a greater or less number of hogs connected with them, generally kept under them.

Second.—A large number of hogs is kept by persons, mostly those of foreign birth, who have no stables. In some places particularly near the shore East of Ives Street, many hogs are kept without license, and by persons who do not live in that locality. The number there is so great, that at times the whole atmosphere of that portion of the city is affected by the offensive effluvia arising from them.

It is evident that this state of affairs calls for efficient action on the part of the city authorities. There can be no doubt that the large number of hogs in the locality above named is dangerous to the public health at all times ; and should we be visited by an epidemic of cholera, dysentery, or other kindred diseases, the hogs would be the direct cause of a large amount of sickness and mortality.

But besides the danger to the public health, there are other serious evils arising from keeping hogs in that locality. Very few of the persons who keep hogs there have any means of supporting them except by begging or stealing swill. Scores, if not many more, of women and children are employed in this business. The children are kept from school, and brought up in a way which directly tends to ignorance, vagrancy and crime for the purpose of supporting this hog nuisance. The greater

portion of the food which is begged by children with baskets, from door to door, goes to feed the hogs kept contrary to law and contrary to the public good, and very many of the children and women to whom the people give their swill, do not hesitate to steal whatever they can lay their hands upon.

What is true of the locality above named is also true to a less extent of other portions of the city, and is true to an equal or greater extent of those portions of North Providence, Johnston and Cranston lying near the city limits. I presume there can be no doubt in the minds of any one that such a nuisance should be removed; and, in fact, I suppose the principle is established in the minds of your Board, as well as of the people generally, that the keeping of hogs anywhere in the compact portions of the city, *with one exception*, is a nuisance, dangerous to the public health, and which should not be tolerated under any circumstances.

The exception referred to is *the keeping of hogs in connection with horse stables*. Within the last few years this practice has increased to an alarming extent, until nearly all the stables in the city have more or less hogs connected with them. This practice finds its advocates, of course, among those pecuniarily interested, and among some others who probably do not understand all the bearings of the question.

The reasons given in favor of keeping hogs under stables are very few, and as follows:

First.—The profit arising from the practice. Hogs kept in this way obtain considerable food from the offal of the stable, and are kept at a comparatively small expense. This reason needs very few words in reply. If the keeping of hogs in this way is, directly or indirectly, dangerous to the public health, as we fully believe and expect to show, then no considerations of profit should have any influence.

The Second,—and principal reason which is given in favor of keeping hogs under stables, is, that by rooting over the manure they prevent it from heating and thus prevent a great nuisance.

This reason is constantly urged by those keepings hog under stables, and those in favor of the practice, and we are assured

that it is absolutely necessary to keep hogs for this purpose. This is, in fact, the only reason given for the practice which is worthy of consideration. But what does it amount to? The hogs are a nuisance in the compact part of the city; and the stable manure is a nuisance, unless frequently removed. The reason given amounts to this: that we should permit the stable manure to remain until there is danger that it will become a nuisance, in order to make use of another nuisance to remove it.

But do the hogs prevent a nuisance? I am satisfied that they do not. On the contrary, I am satisfied from much observation, that while the hogs prevent the fermentation, to some extent, of the manure, they create a nuisance far more offensive to the senses, far more dangerous to the public health, and of exceedingly great danger to the health and comfort of the horses kept in the stables.

The fact is well known that many horses have a peculiar antipathy to swine, and are rendered nervous, excitable, and sometimes sick, by their presence. No person who fully understands and appreciates the qualities of horses, and who has any regard for their well being, would harbor the idea of compelling them to live directly over a herd of swine. It is not practised to any extent in other places, and even in Providence, there are some stables where a hog would not be permitted to remain for any consideration.

But this reason against keeping hogs under stables is more of a private than of a public nature. There are other reasons which are of more importance to the public.

One of the most important of these is the fact that hogs kept in this way become diseased, and a large amount of diseased food is thus thrown into the market to be eaten by our citizens.

It is well known that the hog is peculiarly liable to disease and particularly to scrofulous disease:—much more so than any other domestic animal. A damp, cold atmosphere and want of sunlight, are the most active agents that can be found for the production of scrofula and consumption.

Look at the condition of hogs kept under stables in this city.

I have visited and examined many of them. I have seen hogs in a deep, dark cellar, with no circulation of air, wallowing in the most disgusting, liquid filth, from six inches to a foot in depth, never permitted to see the light of the sun, nor to breathe a particle of pure air, nor to drink a drop of pure water, nor to step on dry ground. There is a petition now before your Board for a license to keep two hogs under a stable where only one horse is kept. I have visited it and found a cellar with no opening whatever into it, except through a trap-door in the stable. Not a ray of light can reach the animals, nor a breath of pure air, but they are kept in perfect darkness, surrounded with cold, wet filth. This stable is within six feet of a neighbor's dwelling.

These are among the worst cases. Others are different, and in some cases the animals have some access to the light; and in some cases there is not so much dampness; but all the hogs in the city, in connection with stables, are deprived, *to a greater or less extent*, of pure air, and pure water; all are exposed to dampness and cold; all live more or less in darkness; and all eat the same disgusting, unhealthy food.

It is well known that the flesh of animals partakes, to a great extent, of the nature of the food the animal consumes. On this account the flesh and milk of cows, fed on distillery slops, have been found to be of the most unhealthy character, and the prolific sources of disease where they are eaten.

Can any animal, and especially can the hog which is peculiarly liable to scrofulous disease, remain healthy, living under such circumstances and eating such food? The idea is absurdity itself, and contrary to the common sense of every individual. No person can believe it.

Common sense shows, and it may be taken as positively certain, that every hog, kept under such circumstances, even for a few months, must become diseased.

If the allotted life of hogs was two or three years instead of a few months, not one in a hundred of the hogs in this city, kept under stables, would live out half its days.

But it is said that hogs kept in this way make most beautiful pork, and within a week, I have been told that one of our best

markets has recently paid one cent per pound more than the usual price, for a lot of hogs raised under a stable, in this city, because the pork was of such a superior quality.

It is a well known fact that in the first stages of scrofula and consumption, (which are of similar nature,) the patient seems, to the inexperienced observer, to show signs of the most perfect health, and even grows fleshy, while there is a clearness and beauty of the complexion almost to be envied. It may be so with these stable hogs. For a few months they have a greedy appetite and fatten readily, and are killed before the disease is sufficiently developed to check the growth of the animal.

I have not one particle of doubt, that ninety-nine in every hundred of the hogs kept under stables in this city are seriously diseased when killed, so much so, as to render their flesh unhealthy and dangerous to the public; and could they be examined by competent persons, evidences of disease would be found in nearly all cases. But whether these evidences of disease were sufficiently developed to be seen or not, when we take into consideration the circumstances under which the hogs are kept, and the nature of the food they eat, the proof of the existence of disease, whether it can be seen or not, is positively certain to every intelligent mind acquainted with the subject.

Such are the hogs which are raised in Providence, to be eaten, and which are sold by scores and hundreds annually in our markets, and are eaten by our citizens. Very few of them are eaten by those who raise them. I have been told, in more than one instance, by those keeping swine in this way, that they preferred to sell their hogs in the market, and buy country pork for their own use. The amount of pork of this description raised in Providence and sold in our markets, is considerable. Estimating the number of hogs at 400, if their weight averages only 200 pounds each, we have 80,000 pounds, or 40 tons of this diseased food sold in our markets annually.

Such are my reasons for believing that the keeping of hogs in connection with stables in this city, is indirectly of great danger to the public health. I am not alone in these opinions; but beg leave herewith to present a series of resolutions upon this subject, which, after a full discussion, were *unanimously*

adopted at the last regular meeting of the Providence Medical Association. These resolutions fully confirm the opinions I have given, and I have no doubt that they would be endorsed by every physician in the city. [See page 15.]

But the objections to hogs under stables are not alone of a sanitary nature. They do, in many cases, make a serious and offensive nuisance to the neighborhood. Complaints of this character are often made, and I can refer you to some of our prominent citizens who have complained ineffectually, for years, of the disagreeable noise and offensive smell from hogs under stables in their vicinity.

I may be permitted to add a few words upon the general subject of the use of swine's flesh for food. This use has become so general in this country, that very few persons look upon the subject in a proper light. It would seem, and may perhaps be granted, that the use of this food is necessary in newly settled countries, or at least that it would be difficult to provide a substitute. The hog comes to maturity so quickly, and increases in numbers so rapidly, that it seems to supply an important need to the settlers of new countries.

But I have no doubt that the prohibition of swine's flesh for food, by the great Lawgiver of the Jews, was made for important sanitary reasons, and that these reasons are of equally great, if not greater importance at the present day, and particularly to the people of this country.

An epidemic disease of a peculiarly virulent character, commonly called Hog-Cholera, has prevailed among those animals in this country for the last dozen years. This disease has destroyed millions of hogs, and millions more have had the disease and recovered from it sufficiently to live a few months and be killed for food, though it is believed that an animal which has the disease can never be completely cured. This disease has prevailed in this vicinity, and hundreds of hogs have died with it within a few miles of Providence;—a large number during the past winter.

Is it too much to believe that, on this account, an immense amount of diseased pork finds its way into the markets of all

our cities? Besides this, and other diseases, no less than five parasitic animals have been found to exist in swine, some of which, when eaten, produce serious disease in human beings.

The most important of these are the measles, or bladder-worms, and the spiral flesh-worms, both of which are found in the flesh or lean meat of hogs.

The first of these, when eaten in the pork, produces the tape-worm. The second, when eaten, produces a serious disease, called "Trichiniasis," the symptoms and causes of which have been known and described only within the last few years. It is supposed that the not unfrequent cases of "ham-poisoning," so called, are caused by this parasite in the flesh of the pork eaten.

It is known that both these parasites exist in hogs in this country; but to what extent is not known. The diseases caused by them are not known to be very common, for the reason, as is supposed, that thorough cooking of the pork kills the eggs of the worm and thus prevents the development of disease from them.

My own opinion is that no pork should be sold in our markets unless the animal is killed and pronounced good, under the superintendence and careful inspection of persons competent to determine the existence of disease.

But whatever may be our opinion in relation to the use of country-fed pork for food, it seems to me difficult for any one to believe, that pork raised in city pens, or under city stables, or fed upon city offal, should be eaten by human beings; and if such pork is not fit for human food, is it not the duty of those having the power, to protect the people by prohibiting its sale in our markets?

Most certainly it would not be expected that we would encourage the production and sale of such food by granting licenses to keep swine in every portion of the city.

If the principles and facts given in the preceding pages are correct, of which I have not a particle of doubt, I can do nothing less than to recommend that all petitioners for licenses to keep hogs under or about stables, have leave to withdraw.

But if these principles are correct, something more than this negative action is needed. It is desirable that the hogs should not be permitted to remain in the city under stables, as in past years, contrary to law. I would recommend the passage of an order, and its enforcement, forbidding any person to keep hogs, under any circumstances, in the compact portions of the city. Heretofore there has been some doubt expressed in regard to the legality of orders upon this subject passed by the Board of Aldermen, on the ground that they were passed under authority delegated by the City Council, while the City Council had no power to delegate any such authority.

At present, however, there is no doubt whatever of the power of the Board of Aldermen on this point. The General Assembly, at its last Session, passed an Act expressly granting to the Board of Aldermen of the City of Providence the power "to make rules regulating, controlling, or prohibiting the keeping of all swine within said city, whether in, under, or about stables, or in any other locality."

The Act also gives the Board of Aldermen the power to establish penalties for the violation of such rules, not exceeding twenty dollars for each day in which such violation is persisted in.

As this Act may not have been seen by the members of your Board, and as it contains other provisions of great importance in connection with this subject, I give it in full.

It is as follows :

CHAPTER 580.

AN ACT IN AMENDMENT OF, AND IN ADDITION TO, CHAPTER 74, OF THE REVISED STATUTES, "OF REGULATIONS FOR THE PREVENTION OF INFECTIOUS AND CONTAGIOUS DISEASES."

Passed March 17, 1865.

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows :

SECTION 1. The board of aldermen of the City of Providence are authorized and empowered to make all such rules and regulations as they shall deem necessary, to regulate and control the construction of all privy vaults, sinks, sink drains,

sink spouts and cesspools within the City of Providence ; to prescribe the material of which the same shall be constructed ; fix the location of all privy vaults and cesspools, and the outlets of all sinks, drains, and sink spouts, and to provide for the summary removal or reconstruction of all such as shall be by them deemed prejudicial to the public health ; also to make rules prescribing the location of all stables within said city, and the time and manner of removing all manure therefrom ; and regulating, controlling, or prohibiting the keeping of all swine within said city, whether in, under or about stables, or in any other locality.

SEC. 2. The board of aldermen of said city are authorized and empowered to establish penalties for the violation of any of the rules and regulations which may be made by them in pursuance of section 1 of this act, not exceeding, in each instance, the sum of twenty dollars for each day in which such violation shall be persisted in, to be recovered to and for the use of said city upon complaint and warrant before the police court of said city.

SEC. 3. This act shall take effect immediately on and after its passage.

It will be seen that besides the complete control of the subject of keeping hogs in the city, the Act also gives the Board of Aldermen the power to regulate stables so as to prevent them from becoming nuisances. A judicious exercise of the powers granted will remove all occasion and excuse for keeping hogs under stables. Frequent complaints are made in relation to stables, and too often they are a nuisance and an annoyance to the neighborhood. A suit recently decided in the Supreme Court in this city, seems to decide that a well regulated stable is a nuisance to the neighbors, and being such, the owners are liable for damages.

I would recommend that orders be passed by your Board, in relation to stables, and particularly in relation to the removal of the manure from them, which will prevent the nuisance they too often create, and will take away all excuse for keeping hogs about them.

As it is important that these orders should be passed in a legal manner, it may be well to refer the recent Act of the General Assembly to a Committee, for the purpose of prepar-

ing, under the advice of the City Solicitor, such rules and regulations as may be desirable.

In relation to the serious nuisance from the hogs in that portion of the city east of Ives Street; the population there has largely increased since the passage of the resolutions in December, 1855, and is now so large that that section ought to be included in the compact portion of the city, from which swine are entirely excluded, as described in the first resolution. If this is done, and if the provisions of the Second and Fourth resolutions are strictly enforced, a great nuisance will be removed.

Respectfully,

EDWIN M. SNOW,
Superintendent of Health.

PROVIDENCE, May 8th, 1865.

RESOLUTION OF BOARD OF ALDERMEN.

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN, May 8, 1865.

Resolved, That the act of the General Assembly, passed March 17, 1865, in relation to the prevention of infectious and contagious diseases, be referred to Aldermen Jones and Barker, as a committee, with the advice of the City Solicitor, to prepare, for the action of the Board of Aldermen, such rules, regulations, and orders as they may deem necessary to accomplish the objects of said act.

A true copy—witness,

SAMUEL W. BROWN, City Clerk.

At a meeting of the Providence Medical Association, on Monday evening, May 1st, 1865, the following resolutions were *unanimously* adopted, after discussion :—

Resolved, In the opinion of this Association, that the keeping of hogs in the compact portions of any city is a nuisance which is dangerous to the public health, and should never be permitted.

Resolved, That the keeping of hogs in connection with horse stables is especially dangerous to the public health, on account of the diseased food which is thus raised to be eaten by our citizens.

Resolved, That, as physicians, we fully believe that it is impossible to keep hogs for any length of time, as they are usually kept about stables in this city, without their becoming diseased and unfit for food.

GEORGE L. COLLINS, *President*.

W. H. TRAVER, *Secretary*.





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